

TRICARE Europe

Release

"Your passport to quality health"

Phone: (DSN) 496-6315 (Comm.) 06302-67-6315

International: 00-49-6302-67-6315

Email: teopao@europe.TRICARE.osd.mil

Web: www.europe.TRICARE.osd.mil

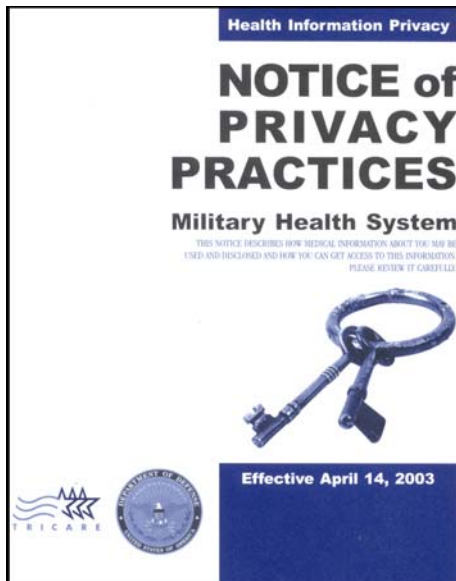
Release Number: 03-16

Date: July 1, 2003

Contact: Troy Kitch

What HIPAA Means to You

Have you heard of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act? HIPAA is a U.S. law that sets national privacy standards that better protect your medical records and other personnel health information. For TRICARE beneficiaries, these new privacy requirements strengthen the strong set of patient privacy regulations already in place within the Military Health System.



All TRICARE beneficiaries should have received a ***"Notice of Privacy Practices"*** in the mail that explains these new standards in detail. The next time you visit your local military Medical Treatment Facility, you may be asked if you received this document. If you have not, you can get a copy during your visit.

Once you have a copy of this notice, you will be asked to sign a medical record jacket label to acknowledge receipt. By acknowledging receipt, you are verifying only that you received a copy — not that you have read or agree with the document. Those who choose not to acknowledge receipt of the notice are still eligible for care within the MHS.

Why read the ***Notice of Privacy Practices***?

The privacy notice provides clear guidance about how your MTF will safeguard your personal health information from unauthorized access or disclosure. It also informs you of your right to know when and to whom your medical information may have been disclosed; how to request access to, or receive a copy of your health information on file at the

MTF; how to request an amendment to correct erroneous information on file; and how to file a grievance regarding any privacy concern you may have.

What does HIPAA do for you, the patient?

- *It helps you make informed choices when seeking care and reimbursement for care based on how your personal health information may be used.*
- *It enables you to find out how your private medical information may be used, and learn about past disclosures of your private information.*
- *It generally limits the release of your personal information to the minimum reasonably needed for the purpose of the disclosure (i.e., only enough information is released to "get the job done.")*
- *It generally gives you the right to examine and obtain a copy of your own health records and request amendments.*
- *It empowers you to control certain uses and disclosures of your own health records and request corrections.*

Your Privacy is a Top Priority

Each MTF now has a trained privacy officer who is available to respond to any questions or concerns you may have about the new HIPAA privacy rules. The privacy officer is also your advocate, ensuring that personal health information maintained by your MTF remains protected yet accessible to you and your provider.

If you think your privacy rights have been violated, you may submit a written complaint to your local MTF or TMA Privacy Officer. You may call the general information number at your local MTF, visit their website or call the HIPAA information line at 888-DOD-HIPA (this number is not toll-free overseas).

A copy of the MHS "***Notice of Privacy Practices***" is available on the TRICARE Web site at www.tricare.osd.mil/hipaa/privacy.cfm if you did not receive a copy in the mail. Copies are also available at your local MTF. Additional information on HIPAA, TRICARE and the new privacy standards is also available at www.tricare.osd.mil/hipaa.

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